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July 15, 2005

Comments on the Burton Creek State Park Gneal Plan and Draft EIR

Myron B "Mike" Hawkins

Generally speaking, I feel that the Park concept presented in the General Plan is a misguided attempt to "make a silk purse out of a sow's ear." My bases for this opinion are given in the following paragraphs.

First, I believe that a majority of campers that visit the Tahoe Basin come here to experience the wonders presented by this unique National treasure and to enjoy the scenic and recreational resources of Lake Tahoe, whether this be tanning and picnicking on the beach, swimming, fishing or boating. The General Plan does not discuss these aspects of the visitor experience, probable because the Tahoe City Recreational Area is so small and inadequate for additional water front users. Consequently, the Burton Creek campers who seek the Lake Tahoe experience will be forced to drive considerable distances to avail themselves of other public and private facilities many of which are already used to capacity. These sorties will contribute, of course, to existing traffic and parking problems. I feel that it is mandatory that any development of the Burton Creek State Park must include contiguous waterfront facilities for the use of the Park's campers.

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The proposed park, by the nature of not having waterfront access, with or without camping, will be, as the General Plan suggests, primarily a hiking, backpacking, bicycling, ORVing and horseback riding facility. I have no reason to believe that a park with these recreational amenities, with or without camping, will be a popular destination when so many other State and Federal parks offer more interesting and attractive venues throughout California and the West. Without a doubt, however, such a park would be an attraction for many local residents.

39.2

Unfortunately, I for see the possibility that a park developed as indicated in the previous paragraph being a recreational facility primarily for locals and an "over flow" facility for more popular State Parks in the area.

Note: In order to evaluate my opinions, I suggest that State Parks conduct a survey of campers at other Parks around Lake Tahoe to determine the primary reasons that campers select Lake Tahoe as the destination for their vacations.

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From: Tom Carter <tfccarter@cwoc.com>
To: <kande@parks.ca.gov>
Date: 7/25/2005 2:16:07 PM
Subject: burton creek

Hello -

I live in Cedar Flat near the proposed expansion. I am troubled daily by the access to the USFS on motorized vehicles.

40.0

I realise this is legal on designated roads and trails. However, there is much negligence and no enforcement. Wouldn't increasing the access exacerbate this problem?

Every hiking trail becomes a bike trail which eventually turns into a motorbike trail in this area.

When additional activities and increased use is introduced how is it going to be controlled? Is there a budget for enforcement?

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What happened to the Goshawk closures? We don't get a bike trail for 15 years because of the sensitivity of the area and now we are faced with planned increased traffic?

I understand that we need to provide areas for visitors and families around the lake.

I also understand why those living nearby a proposed development would be questioning this additional development.

I hope you consider my questions concerning this project.

I will be monitoring the "progress".

Sincerely,

Tom Carter and Carol Mazerall

From: "Benita Luke" <benitaluke@sbcglobal.net>
To: <kande@parks.ca.gov>
Date: 7/25/2006 1:55:16 PM
Subject: comments

Of course any people that live in the area of this purposed development are not excited about this. Bringing campers in to our backyards is a security, noise, and traffic issue as well as increased chance of fire.

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I do not understand why we are talking about increasing our growing problem of traffic opposed to finding ways to mitigate it. This area is already being enjoyed by anyone that wants to hike or bike and parking has never been a problem. I'm all for keeping the forest preserved in it's natural state as much as possible opposed to making our beautifully unique area look more and more like the areas that the tourist are coming from. Why not first at least pay attention to the traffic problem and the cleaning up of all the dead trees in the forest to help with the fire situation. It sounds to me like we would be spending tax payers money that could be more appropriately used in other areas. There are already biking roads around the lake and river if people need that kind of format. Many people come here to bike and hike that do not wish to see signs, buildings, fences etc. Perhaps you will be increasing the number of one type of person coming here for enjoyment but decreasing the other.

This proposed campground is just too close to residential homes!

I am all for cleaning up the forest and addressing any erosion problems etc. and leaving everything else as it is.

Thank you,
Benita

July 24, 2005

Ken Anderson, Sierra District
Post Office Box 266
Tahoma, CA 96142

Dear Ken:

You did a good job of introducing yourself at our July 7th meeting so let me try to do the same. As a former program manager both in and for the Government for over 20 years, I appreciate your challenges in writing a General Plan like this. As a trained biologist I understand your focus, and as an owner of properties on both the south and north shores of Lake Tahoe for more than 30 years I have seen its evolution first hand. I am a practical moderate, and I have serious problems with agenda-biased pseudo-scientists and petty bureaucrats on any side of an issue. I am tenacious, and not easily discouraged if I feel something is worth pursuing.

Thank you for the chance to submit comments on this Draft, and I sincerely hope they will be afforded serious consideration in the same constructive atmosphere as they are offered. At first glance some may seem to be minutiae, but decades of lessons learned have clearly proven proper structure and wording often make the difference between failed and successful plans. While many of the following comments are keyed to sections in the Executive Summary, they also apply to all related portions of the: Main Body, Attachments, Figures, etc. Copies of these comments have also been provided to other interested parties requesting them.

42.0

1. Comment: I strongly recommend inserting a clear and concise statement of the "official mission of the California State Parks" at the very beginning of all major components of this Draft document, including the Executive Summary. Inserting this absolutely critical element provides a cornerstone for all goals and arguments presented in this Draft, and ensures that they are consistent with the officially stated mission of California State Parks (CSP).

42.1

2. Comment: It is strongly recommended that objective historical synopses of all previous Drafts be included in the introductory sections of both the Main Body and Executive Summary. These synopses must openly discuss the pros and cons of controversial issues including: numerous campgrounds, a secondary access road to NTHS for public (fire) safety, etc. and CSP's rationale for not proceeding with prior Draft Plans. Including such background information up front can help de-fuse legitimate legal arguments by opponents that CSP is attempting any "end-run" now by laying the cards on the table.

- 42.2 3. Comment: Executive Summary, Pg 1, Introduction, Line 13 – The current statement that, “The property is surrounded by undeveloped Forest Service land...” is misleading and incorrect. It gives the false impression this is in the midst of a wilderness, instead of adjacent to municipal and residential areas.
- 42.3 4. Comment: Executive Summary, Pg 2, Purpose of the General Plan, First Bullet – This currently ambiguous statement about “providing the foundation for future facility development in the park.” raises a big red flag for opponents because it is too open-ended. A more respected approach would be to spell out what CSP’s specific intentions are regarding “future facility development.”
- 42.4 5. Comment: Executive Summary, Pg 2, Purpose of the General Plan, Second Bullet – This statement currently refers to some “immediate need,” but does not offer any legitimate explanation for any such “need” or why CSP thinks it to be “immediate.” Such words will damage the Plan’s credibility.
- 42.5 6. Comment: Executive Summary, Pg 2, Purpose of the General Plan, Fourth Bullet – Tying the CTC Dollar Point property in any way to the Burton Creek State Park may spell the failure of this Plan, because doing so is vehemently opposed by many interests with legal clout. Any “alternative flexibility” it may offer is negated by putting the entire project in jeopardy. Delete this bullet!
- 42.6 7. Comment: Executive Summary, Pg 3, Unavoidable Significant Environmental Effects, Paragraph Title – The current wording of this paragraph title is invalid, since none of the items mentioned are truly “unavoidable.” Deleting the word “Unavoidable” from this paragraph title would be an excellent first step.
- 42.7 8. Comment: Executive Summary, Pg 3, Unavoidable Significant Environmental Effects, Line 6 – Honesty is the best policy. If analysis shows that proposed campground development “will” contribute to traffic congestion use that word, not “may” as currently worded. “May” contradicts inclusion as “unavoidable.”
- 42.8 9. Comment: Executive Summary, Pg 3, Unavoidable Significant Environmental Effects, First Bullet, Last Sentence – Delete this sentence, because it detracts and adds little if any tangible value. “Intent” is a nebulous word in this case.
- 42.9 10. Comment: Executive Summary, Pg 3, Unavoidable Significant Environmental Effects, Third Bullet – The current statement is incorrect and misleading. The proposed access route(s) are not located in “an undeveloped area with no current traffic congestion.” Delete this bullet.
- 42.10 11. Comment: Executive Summary, Pg 4, Unavoidable Significant Environmental Effects, Last Subparagraph – To be meaningful, replace all uses of the verb “may” with the verb “will” throughout this subparagraph. Also, delete the word “unavoidable” from the last sentence in this subparagraph since it clearly isn’t.

- 42.11 12. Comment: Executive Summary, Pg 4, Potential Environment Impacts and Mitigation, Third Subparagraph – Expand upon the statement made here to describe what process CSP used to arrive at this determination. Also, in its last sentence, replace the words “may be” with the word “is.” It’s definite.
- 42.12 13. Comment: Executive Summary, Pgs 4 & 5, Aesthetic Resources, Second Subparagraph – In the first sentence of this subparagraph, replace the word “can” with the word “will” to indicate a commitment. Also, in the last sentence of this subparagraph, replace the words “a campground” with the words “all facilities, roads, etc.”
- 42.13 14. Comment: Executive Summary, Pg 5, Biological Resources, Second Subparagraph – Replace the current last sentence in this subparagraph with the following one, “Construction of new roads, trails, facilities, or structures in previously undisturbed areas will impact wildlife.” This is a true statement.
- 42.14 15. Comment: Executive Summary, Pg 5, Biological Resources, Fourth Subparagraph – The sentence beginning of the 8th line of this subparagraph currently says that “State and federal resource agencies will be consulted...” It should also discuss the matter of compliance with regulations of these, as well as other (e.g., local, county, bi-state) relevant agencies at Tahoe.
- 42.15 16. Comment: Executive Summary, Pg 6, Biological Resources, Fourth Subparagraph – In the third line on this page, delete the words “whenever possible.”
- 42.16 17. Comment: Executive Summary, Pg 6, Cultural Resources, Third Subparagraph – The first sentence must clarify whom will “review” potential cultural resources. Is it CSP? Native Americans? Others? Be careful here.
- 42.17 18. Comment: Executive Summary, Pg 6, Water Quality Resources – The issues of wildfire prevention and protection from proposed source within the park are of major concern from the standpoints of both water quality and public safety. Unless CSP is pro-active in this area now and throughout the process, they are setting themselves up for extremely serious and lengthy litigation.
- 42.18 19. Comment: Existing and Proposed Classifications Map – Remove all mention of the CTC Dollar Property from this map and elsewhere in the Draft Plan for Burton Creek. Including this controversial issue is a very serious mistake.
- 42.19 20. Comment: Preferred Alternative Proposed and Alternative Access Roads Map – First, delete the word “Preferred” from the title of this map. It’s clearly not preferred by local residents, and inflames powerful opponents. Secondly, remove all mention of the CTC Dollar Property from this map and elsewhere in the Draft Plan for Burton Creek. Including such a controversial issue is a

very serious mistake. Thirdly, re-word the listed "objectives" to be less "blue sky" and nebulous, and more measurable and consistent with the main Plan.

42.20

21. Comment: Management Planning Zones Map – I cannot overemphasize the importance of removing all mention of the CTC Dollar Property from this map and elsewhere in the Draft Plan for Burton Creek. Continuing to include this "alternative" could very well lead to the failure of yet another Draft plan.

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22. Comment: Preferred Alternative Proposed Facilities Map – First, delete the word "Preferred" from the title of this map, since it's clearly not preferred by many local residents, and inflames powerful opponents. Second, remove all mention of the CTC Dollar Property from this map and elsewhere in the Draft Plan for Burton Creek. Including such a controversial issue is a very serious mistake. Third, re-word the "objectives" listed here to be less nebulous, more objectively measurable and consistent with the main Plan. Other people have expressed major concerns about the proposed facility locations, and I will let them address those to you directly.

42.22

23. Comment: Management Planning Zones Map – Having been there and done that myself, I very strongly recommend deleting all mention of the CTC Dollar Property again here and elsewhere in the Plan for Burton Creek State Park. This contentious "alternative" isn't worth the risk to your project as a whole.

I will stop here, because I expect you will have plenty of other inputs to review. Please contact me if you have any questions about these comments. Once again, thanks for the opportunity, and I wish you good luck from here on.

Yours truly,

Roger Huff